



PATH Scholarship 2021-22

Application Guide for Higher Education Institutions in the U.S.

Thank you for your interest in applying for funding from the PATH Scholarship Program. Now in its second year, the 2021-22 PATH scholarship is inviting applications from public four-year institutions, with a preference for regional institutions, in the U.S., including Puerto Rico.

Institutions selected for a scholarship award will receive a single block grant of between \$10,000 and \$25,000 (USD) to use to assist their students who are experiencing financial hardship and are at risk of dropping out of school. Awards of up to \$1,500 (USD) can be made to individual students. Institutions will have considerable flexibility in determining the selection criteria and individual award amounts that best fit their affected students' needs.

This guide will assist you in completing and submitting the application, available at <https://stayonpath.org/>. It will also offer suggestions that we hope will help you to become a successful applicant.

Application Timeline

Applications for 2021-22 PATH scholarship funding are due to the Ellucian Foundation by July 14, 2021 at 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Institutions will be notified of the results of their application the week of August 2, 2021. Decisions will be made by an independent selection committee and will be final.

Selected U.S. institutions will receive their funds during the week of August 16, 2021, and will be required to disburse those funds no later than October 22, 2021. Institutions will then be required to report awarding and disbursement details to the Ellucian Foundation by December 17, 2021.

Key dates for the 2021-22 PATH scholarship are listed below:

June 14, 2021	PATH scholarship application and materials available to institutions
July 14, 2021	All applications must be submitted by this date
July 19 – 30, 2021	Independent committee review of applications
Week of August 2, 2021	Institutions notified of committee decisions

Week of August 16, 2021	Institutions receive PATH scholarship funds from the Ellucian Foundation to distribute to students
October 22, 2021	PATH scholarship funds distributed in full by recipient institutions by this date
December 17, 2021	Institutions complete reporting requirements to the Ellucian Foundation

Application Overview

Institution Eligibility

Institutions must meet the following criteria to apply:

- Be a four-year U.S. public institution. (System offices that oversee multiple institutions may apply, but each school will be evaluated individually.)
 - Preference will be given to regional institutions.
- Be eligible to participate in Title IV aid programs.
- Be in good standing with their governing body, accrediting agency, state, and U.S. Department of Education as appropriate.
 - If the institution is not in good standing, it will have an opportunity to explain why and still receive consideration.

Institutions must also agree to established terms and conditions, which include:

- Affirming that PATH scholarship funding will not replace or supplant other grant assistance.
- Committing to the timeframe of awarding funds and reporting data.
- Affirming that it will award only eligible students.

Institutions will be asked demographic information about the institution, and basic questions about their population experiencing financial distress that may have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to demographic information and required affirmations, institutions will be asked to provide a narrative describing:

- The anticipated effect of the funding on recipients;
- The philosophy and approach for how the institutions will select students (including any additional criteria imposed);
- How the proposal assists students experiencing economic hardship, ensuring that they are able to continue their education;
- The funding distribution method;

- How they will comply with reporting requirements, including the need to collect permission from recipients to share the required information with the Ellucian Foundation;
- Current student retention and/or persistence initiatives and how the PATH scholarship funds would differ from or augment those efforts; and
- Efforts made by the institution, if any, to provide new, expanded, and/or modified programs designed to serve the evolving needs of the community in light of economic hardship worsened by COVID-19.

Student Eligibility

In addition to having significant financial need placing them at risk of leaving school, students must meet the following minimum criteria to be eligible to receive funds:

- Be a regular student, defined as:
 - Seeking a credential, such as a degree or certificate (including short-term programs)
 - Not dual-enrolled in high school and postsecondary education.
- Currently enrolled at the institution.

While there are no donor-imposed restrictions on the following student characteristics, institutions must address in their applications which students would receive funds according to these categories. For example, an institution could require PATH scholarship recipients to be enrolled full-time and maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

The four characteristics the institution must address in its application are:

- Enrollment status – will a certain level of enrollment be required?
- Academic standing or Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) – will recipients be required to be in good standing?
- Financial need – will recipients be required to demonstrate federally defined need? (Institutions must adhere to Title IV rules regarding Estimated Financial Assistance (EFA) and packaging federal aid.)
- Title IV eligibility requirements – if institutions will require students to have completed the FAFSA for PATH scholarship consideration, how will they ensure Title IV compliance, such as performing federal verification and monitoring database matches?

Fund Disbursement

The PATH Scholarship Program was created to help institutions meet the immediate needs of students whose education is at risk due to financial hardship that may have been worsened by the COVID-19

pandemic. The funds must be fully disbursed by October 22, 2021. Institutions may choose the disbursement methods that best meet their students' needs.

Institutions may determine that some recipients' needs might require more than the \$1,500 (USD) maximum award. In those rare cases, institutions may request exceptions to the maximum award. To request an exception, email blueicon@nasfaa.org with a brief narrative explaining the reason for the exception. Exceptions will be evaluated on the basis of 1) being reasonable and 2) not diminishing the impact of the PATH scholarship funding for other recipients or the institution.

Fund Reporting

The Ellucian Foundation uses data to evaluate the success of the program, and to plan improvements for subsequent years. To that end, institutions will be required to report the following information about each awarded student:

- Full name, hometown and state, and email address
- Age at time of disbursement
- Program of study
- Race/ethnicity information as reported to IPEDS (*for students who reported that information*):
 - Hispanic/Latino (Yes/No)
 - One or more of the following races:
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - White
- Anticipated graduation/completion date
- Award amount
- Brief (not to exceed 100 words) explanation of the student's need for PATH scholarship funds
- Copy of students' signed permission to share award information, along with a recent photo (if provided) to use in scholarship promotion.

In addition, institutions will be required to report the number of enrolled students who requested or received funding from any source to assist with a financial distress-related need during Fall 2021.

This information is due to the Ellucian Foundation by December 17, 2021.

Application Tips

We hope that the following will help you complete and submit a successful application:

- Follow instructions closely to ensure that your application is complete and submitted by the established deadline.
- Consider all of the ways that financial distress has had an adverse impact on your students' ability to stay in school, and how those students can best demonstrate that impact to you.
- Make a compelling case for how you will use the funds to ensure that your recipients will have the best chance of completing their educations.
- Consider how PATH scholarship funding will complement other available funding to provide optimal assistance to your students.
- Contact NASFAA's Blue Icon Advisors at blueicon@nasfaa.org or Kirsten Weeks at the Ellucian Foundation at Kirsten.Weeks@ellucian.com if you have questions about the application or process.